

**I REMEMBER WHEN**  
**By Carolyn Towle**  
**1975**

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As Walpole's 250th anniversary draws near, I commenced to note the many changes which have taken place since I was a child born and raised here in the town.

It might be interesting to start with TRANSPORTATION.

In the early days we as a family depended largely upon the electric cars or trolleys as some called them and the trains.

In the summer we had "open cars" which meant we children always preferred the front seat directly behind the motorman. If a car came along and the front seat was taken, we usually waited 1/2 hour for the next one.

For 5 cents we could go to Norwood or to So. Walpole. If we changed cars at the Common we could get a transfer and go to E. Walpole for the same price.

Our big thrill was to be allowed to go all the way to Mansfield, through Foxboro, paying 5 cents in each town. So, for 30 cents round trip we could go to Mansfield and return. The terminal was the Mansfield RR Station.

Then another thrilling trip was to travel as far as the Foxboro State Hospital, take another car there and continue to Wrentham and Lake Pearl.

Everything was at a slow pace and informal in those days.

One time a small boy went out to stop the trolley and said to the motorman, "My Mother will be right out. She's putting on her veil".

There were beginning to be a very few automobiles around and they were forever breaking down. Several times, we stalled between Walpole and Norwood on Wildcat Hill and came home on the trolley.

The so-called horse and buggy days were memorable and of course in the winter with plenty of snow, we children "hooked pungs", in case you don't know the meaning, we took our sleds and hitched them to passing horse drawn vehicles with runners. Hartshorn Market, Fisher Coal Co. and W.K. Gilmore pungs were the most accessible to us children and their drivers, let me add, were apparently patient and understanding. We all had sleds, most of which had no steering ability whatsoever. A "flexible flyer"

was just coming into being and was for the chosen few.

The boys had double runners which usually landed us all against a tree before the trip ended. Bloody noses and bruises were par for the course and there were no Curads in those days. Most of these activities took place in the middle of Common St. from the top of the hill down.

Our bicycles during this period, for the most part had no safety brakes and a ride on these down Common Street was exciting to say the least.

Let's not forget the ice man who was a daily sight as he drove his yellow wagon along the street, dripping with ice and followed by children who begged for bits of chopped ice to suck.

All roads were "dirt roads" and in the summer the watering cart belonging to the town went up and down the main streets sprinkling water to lay the dust.

In winter a horse drawn snow plow cleared the sidewalks after a fashion.

And finally our main means of transportation was WALKING. We took family walks in the woods surrounding Walpole.

We went on group picnics--we hunted for wildflowers, we searched for arrowheads behind the High School. We found fresh springs from which we could quench our thirst. We walked to school and church, to the stores and to the neighbors. We WALKED and enjoyed the experience.

The children who lived in the outskirts of Walpole were transported to school on the "Barge". The latter was horse drawn and was the beginning of what later became the "school bus". We who lived too near the school to ride the "barge" envied the children who lived far enough away to enjoy the privilege.

On a personal note, the barge just happened to be stored in our uncle's barn when not in use and you may be sure our neighbors the Newcombs, and my sister and I spent many a happy hour pretending we were riding or driving that barge.

These are just a few memories of a happy childhood in Walpole---

### World War I era in Walpole

As a High School student in Walpole during World War I, my impressions would naturally be more of a superficial nature than would be that of a more mature person.

There were several highlights, however, which stand out rather vividly. First, we belonged to the Junior Red Cross and met each week to roll bandages for the wounded soldiers and sailors.

We kept track of our hours and felt we were doing our part. In the summer I obtained a job as a Farmerette on my Uncle Rob Hartshorn's farm located on the property now owned by his nephew Eugene Hartshorn. Dick Kannelly and I worked each day picking peas and beans --- weeding corn, onions, etc. The produce went to Hartshorn's Market. We worked 8 hrs. per day and as I remember the rate of pay was 6 2/3 cents per hour. Probably that was all we were worth because on one occasion we were told in no uncertain terms that we were pulling the corn instead of the weeds. An easy error when farming was new to us both.

This period in our lives seemed to be filled with parades and constant marching. Our Physical Ed. classes included a great deal of marching in formation and very little time for "at ease". We practiced on the grounds between Plimpton and High Schools continually.

Our songs such as "Over There" and "It's a Long Long Way to Tipperary" were sung wherever we gathered and the words to all of the war tunes were memorized more quickly than songs in our music books.

We learned to honor the American Flag and to treat it with respect at all times. We were proud to fly it from our own homes as a sign of our patriotism.

At last came the first Armistice Day, November 11, 1918. There was a false report that the war was over a few days prior to this date.

A group of us had gathered at the house to make an effigy of the Kaiser. We were to use it in our Victory Parade. In the excitement, someone burned it the night before.

The Walpole Parade consisted of everybody who was able to march. For some reason I never knew why, we marched up High Plain St. to the Standpipes--- and return. A noisy parade and no one in step!

Not too long after Peace had been declared, the men returned home via the troop ships which arrived in Boston Harbor.

This fact put Walpole directly on the map.

The troop trains met the ships and started for Camp Devens along the following route.

They came on the Old Colony Line out to Walpole Heights on Ellis St.---on to Walpole Junction known as Cedar. Switching on to another track at this point they returned to Walpole Station en route to Medfield and on to Ayer.

When they reached Walpole Hts. they blew their train whistles long and loud. That was the signal for all of us to run across town where the train stopped about

15 min. for the engine to take on water.

On one occasion a group of us immediately ran out of class and headed for the station as the whistles had sounded.

People came from other towns to meet these trains. Some carried placards with the names of the returning men whom they hoped to see on the train. We saw several happy family reunions at this spot. Various Walpole organizations furnished coffee and doughnuts to the men who weren't allowed off the train.

We walked up and down the tracks and talked with the soldiers who leaned from the car windows. They threw out all sorts of coins and mementos to us and doubtless Later on regretted this generosity when they finally reached home. Walpole was well represented in the Armed Forces in World War I and several gave their lives for their country.

By Carolyn Towle  
Born in Walpole  
B. Sept. 25, 1901

Mother - Fisher  
10th Generation  
of Fishers in Walpole

England Dedham part of Walpole

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